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gas outlet wall (8) has a diameter smaller than the diameter of said gas inlet wall (7) and of said unperforated wall (15) [respectively], characterised in that said unperforated wall (15) is supported by a gas-tight horizontal baffle (17) which protrudes above the upper end (8a) of said gas outlet wall (8), and [leans] rests on the same.

Claim 6, line 1, delete "of the type";

line 21, change "same" to -- catalytic bed --; change "respectively" to -- and --;

line 22, after "reactor" insert -- respectively --.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Line 10, change "proving" to -- providing --.

REMARKS

The specification and abstract have been amended to overcome the informalities noted by the Examiner in the last Office Action.

In the last Office Action, claims 1 and 5 were objected to because of informalities and claims 1-10 inclusive were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-10 inclusive were further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Mueller (USP 5,372,792) in view of Zardi

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(USP 4,405,562).

Claims 1, 5 and 6 have been amended to overcome the noted informalities and indefiniteness. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

With respect to claim 6, the Examiner stated that the unperforated cylindrical wall and the means for closing are located outside the bed and not in the bed. However, it is clear from Figure 1 that the upper surface of the catalytic bed is clearly above a substantial portion of the unperforated cylindrical wall. Although the upper portion of the unperforated cylindrical wall rises above the catalytic bed, it is still proper to call for "an unperforated cylindrical wall coaxial to said gas outlet wall in said catalytic bed". The means for closing the free space is never set forth as being in the catalytic bed.

With respect to the "means for closing said free space" in claim 1, it is pointed out that the free space between the perforated wall 16 and the non perforated wall 15, does constitute a passage for the gasses even though it is called a free space and therefore, it is perfectly proper to refer to the closing of the free space.

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With respect to the rejection of the claims as being unpatentable over Mueller et al. in view of Zardi et al., it is noted that the steps of method claim 1 and the features set forth in the characterized portion of claim 6, are totally absent from the Mueller et al. reference. Such features are not disclosed or suggested in Zardi et al. nor would they be obvious to one skilled in the art. It was admitted in the last Office Action that Mueller does not disclose positioning of the unperforated cylindrical wall such that the unperforated portion extends into the catalyst bed. It was further admitted that Mueller and Zardi both do not disclose a free space between a perforated gas outlet wall and the unperforated wall. Mueller and Zardi merely disclose a perforated gas outlet wall having an unperforated top portion.

In order to prevent the feeding gas from bypassing the catalytic bed, Mueller provides for a non-pervious top 23 fixed to the top hat 24 which covers the upper surface of the catalytic bed while in Zardi, the unperforated portion extends into the catalytic bed. Since neither of these references disclose a free space between the gas outlet wall and the unperforated wall, it is not seen how it would be the least bit obvious to one skilled in the art to modify Mueller in view of Zardi to obtain such a free space. It

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was stated in the last Office Action that it would be obvious to modify Mueller by extending Mueller's unperforated cap to get an apparatus according to Zardi with the unperforated region extending further down into the bed than Mueller extends. Such a modification would still not meet the steps of claim 1 or the limitations of claim 6. There is absolutely no motivation or teaching in either reference which would even remotely suggest to one skilled in the art the modification of Mueller in view of Zardi as proposed in the last Office Action. Furthermore, the structure, which is obtained by the hypothetical combination of references, still does not even come close to the limitations of the claims of the present application.

Thanks to the features of the present invention, it is possible for the very first time to achieve the double advantage of, on the hand, preventing undesired bypass and, on the other had, because of the free space, to keep the pressure drop through the catalytic bed unchanged when revamping an existing reactor. Contrary to what is stated by the Examiner, there is no single element in the prior art which would have suggested or motivated the skilled person to create such a free space between the perforated and the unperforated walls. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 1-10 inclusive would not be

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the least bit obvious in view of the combined teachings of Mueller et al. and Zardi et al. and it is respectfully requested that these claims be allowed and the application passed to issue forthwith.

If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application on the next Office Action and feels that an interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney for the purpose of arranging such an interview.

Submitted concurrently herewith is a Petition and Fee Letter for a Three Month Extension of Time and check for \$435.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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RVS:jlq

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